

FARQUHAR

HIST. PAH.

From Helen Farquhar

CLICHÉ REVERSE FOR
A TOUCHPIECE OF CHARLES II
BY THOMAS SIMON.

BY
MISS HELEN FARQUHAR.

REPRINTED FROM THE "NUMISMATIC CHRONICLE."

FOURTH SERIES, VOL. IX.

LONDON:

1909.

X84618

34,371

CLICHÉ REVERSE FOR
A TOUCHPIECE OF CHARLES II
BY THOMAS SIMON.

BY
MISS HELEN FARQUHAR.

REPRINTED FROM THE "NUMISMATIC CHRONICLE."

FOURTH SERIES, VOL. IX.

LONDON :

1909.

WELLCOME
LIBRARY
Pam (H)
<i>FARQUHAR</i>

SCROPHULA
NUMISMATICS



CLICHÉ REVERSE FOR A TOUCHPIECE OF
CHARLES II BY THOMAS SIMON.



IN the second edition of Vertue's *Medals and Coins of Thomas Simon*, we find figured on Pl. xxxix. D.E., an angel with a reverse like the thin silver pattern illustrated above. The letter-press describing the piece informs us that Charles II gave a warrant to Simon on the "18th day of September in the twelveth year of our reigne," *i.e.* 1660, commanding him to "forthwith prepare the stamps for our Angell-Golde according to the pattern herein expressed." It appears that this design agrees with the cliché here shown, whilst the obverse presented an angel of very feminine grace, differing widely from the preceding and succeeding types. Folkes and Ruding, on Pl. xiii. 12 (gold), illustrate the reverse only, and state on p. 155 and in vol. ii. p. 359 respectively, that no example is known in gold, but that a silver piece, presented by Mr. Thomas Hollis to the British Museum, proves that the die was made. It seems that Mr. Hollis

did not fulfil his intention, for the National Collection possesses no record of such a gift. Mr. Gough, in his edition of *Vertue*, seems to imply that Mr. Hollis's specimen was complete, but if so it would be curious that Folkes and Ruding should have figured the reverse alone, and it is possible that the obverse is only known from the design apparently affixed to the warrant.

My example of this very rare, perhaps unique, pattern is from the Murdoch, Montagu, and Brice Collections, and is an interesting memorial of Simon's intention of making a far more elaborate touchpiece than that afterwards in use; but we must conclude that Charles II at first used coins struck from older dies, for we are not acquainted with any ordinary angels bearing his name, and we learn from Pepys and Evelyn that he began to touch for the "king's evil" immediately after his arrival in England, and before the issue of this warrant. Pepys mentions the practice on the 23rd of June, 1660, and Evelyn describes the ceremony, including the presentation of the angel, on the 6th of July in the same year, when none of the new currency was completed.

During the latter part of the reign of Charles I the king had not always the required angel at hand, and it is said that he sometimes substituted pieces of silver or copper, and even on occasions touched the patient without presenting any gift, and that during the residence of Charles II in exile it became customary that the sick man should bring his own coin with him.¹ During the years which followed the Restoration, the belief in the royal touch became so great that it is reported² that

¹ *Archaeological Journal*, 1853, vol. x. p. 197.

² *Num. Chron.*, 4th Series, Vol. VIII. p. 123.

nearly 90,800 persons resorted to this cure during his reign, and no less than 24,000³ in the first four years. It is therefore not surprising that the costly angel should have been supplanted by a simpler and smaller design, and that the die, though made by Simon, should have been rejected, as it was not needed for currency.

That Simon was in the habit of striking these proofs in thin silver foil is evidenced by two other patterns in my collection of a broad and half-crown respectively of the first issue. They are much more carefully struck than the current coin, and exemplify the statement of Pepys that Simon's dies were better executed than the hammered coinage would lead us to suppose. He writes, in his Diary of February 18, 1660-61: "We staid, walking in the gallery, where we met with Mr. Slingsby, who showed me the stamps of the King's new coyne, which is strange to see how good they are in the stamp and bad in the money, for lack of skill to make them."

We notice that in the list⁴ drawn up by Simon of the "fourteen several original stamps by way of the Hammer," to which the above half-crown and the broad also belong, the "angel-piece" is included, the total charge amounting to £280.

³ *Num. Chron.*, New Series, Vol. XII. p. 192.

⁴ Vertue's *Medals and Coins of Thomas Simon*, ed. 1780, App. V. p. 89.

